

P240 A TRACT FOR THE FREE STATES.

Am 32

No 20

LET EVERY ONE READ AND CONSIDER BEFORE HE CON-
DEMNS.—A SAFE AND GENEROUS PROPOSITION FOR
ABOLISHING SLAVERY.

It is proposed that all classes of citizens unite in moving the General Government, to appropriate a sum of money sufficient to enable the slaveholding States to emancipate their slaves without embarrassment, and then to authorize the Executive to negotiate with each of those States for the entire abolition of its slave system, upon condition of receiving its proportional part of the fund appropriated for that purpose.

In discussing this proposition, it is designed, first, to notice the objections that may be urged against it, and then to offer some reasons why it should be adopted.

I. The objections are now to be noticed.

1. The General Government has no constitutional power to make an appropriation for such purpose.

To this it is replied, that the design of the Constitution is to secure liberty, and establish justice; and such appropriation would secure both these ends: liberty to the whole nation, and justice to the slaves. Congress has power to collect money to promote the general welfare of the United States.* That the abolition of slavery would be for the general welfare of the United States, can not be reasonably denied; consequently, there is constitutional power to appropriate money for the abolition of it, or any thing else that endangers either the Government, or the well-being of the nation. Since the Government has made appropriations for delivering up fugitive slaves, it

* Con. Art. I, Sec. 8.

will scarcely be denied that it may appropriate money to abolish the slave system.

2. It may be alleged, that the sum necessary to secure the liberation of the slaves would transcend the resources of the nation. To this it is replied, that if it were to be paid to a foreign nation, it might endanger the resources of the country, and render the Government insolvent; but the resources of the nation can not be exhausted by the Government paying money to its own citizens. It would be but a mere change of funds. The slaveholders would receive the money first; the liberated slaves next in the form of wages, and they would expend it for northern products. Thus the funds would flow back again to their original sources in a thousand channels of equalization. The resources of the nation are now exceedingly great, and constantly increasing, both by the natural increase of the present population, and the vast influx of foreigners. The abolition of slavery would add greatly to the industry, economy, and enterprise of the slave States, and thus multiply greatly the wealth of the nation. The common revenue of the Government is now seventy millions of dollars, and might be easily increased to an amount vastly greater. California is now sending forth her millions of gold, to swell the fountains of national wealth. Hence there is no reason to doubt, that the resources of the nation are amply sufficient, to accomplish this great and benevolent enterprise.

3. It is urged that, to purchase the freedom of the slaves would be an acknowledgment of the rightfulness of slaveholding, and, of course, would be immoral. The reverse of this is true. To purchase the freedom of the slaves, would give the highest evidence that we believe the slave system is a violation of the dearest rights of man. In

purchasing the freedom of slaves, we acknowledge the power, but not the right to hold them in bondage. Who would pay money to abolish what he believes to be right? Have the thousands who have contributed to purchase the freedom of husbands, wives, and children, done it because they believed their masters had a right to hold them as property? Have they not done it to relieve the oppressed? Did not Nehemiah, an inspired man, purchase the freedom of his brethren from the heathen? Neh. v, 8. "We after our ability have redeemed our brethren, the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye sell your brethren?" Thus we have the sanction of inspiration for purchasing the freedom of slaves.

4. Because the slaves are not educated, it is affirmed that they are not fit for freedom.

The reply to this is, that rationality is that which capacitates for freedom, and not education. It is rationality, and not education, that makes human beings the proper subjects of government. Education is necessary to enable men to enact laws, and administer government; but to be free, they need but to be rational. In North Carolina, one in every seven white adult persons can not read, and in all slaveholding States there are many white persons of mature age, that are like the slaves, uneducated. Are these thousands of uneducated white people unfit for freedom? Shall they be reduced to slavery? If slavery deprives a large portion of the white people from being educated, what can be hoped for the slaves? They must be freed to be educated. Let this be done, and then it will be time to determine what political rights they shall exercise.

5. It is affirmed, that if the slaves were liberated, they would come into the free States and be a nuisance.

The opposite of this is true. If the slaves were liberated it would create a demand for one half more labor-

ers in the South. The slave women now work in the field ; but when emancipated they will work in the house, and many enterprising freedmen will work for themselves. The farmers and planters will be as anxious to make wealth after emancipation as before, and of course will aim to cultivate as much land as before, and will need as many laborers, and their products being more valuable than those of the North, they can give better wages than will be given at the North, and it will be cheaper living in the South than in the North, because less fuel and clothing will be needed, and the colored people have, like the white people, an affinity for those of their own color, and they are better adapted to laboring in the South than white people. All these circumstances will tend to draw off the colored people from the colder to the warmer parts of the United States, and the white population will generally recede from the warmer to the colder parts ; and that separation, which some so devoutly desire, will gradually take place by natural affinity, and without any wrong. And when the States, in which the slaves are, shall no longer need them as laborers, it will be time to settle the question in relation to where they shall be placed. If necessity shall require it, the Government has territory enough to set off a section for them, and give them lands to induce them to emigrate to. In this there will be nothing wrong.

6. Some may object that the slaves if liberated might make insurrection. This needs but little reply. They would have no inducement to insurrection, nor could they hope for success in it, for they would know that the Government would subdue them. The West India emancipation has clearly shown, that there is no danger of liberated slaves making insurrection.

7. Perhaps some will object, that emancipation by purchase must be immediate and not gradual.

This objection may be easily obviated. Immediate emancipation is what justice requires. Every slave has an inherent right to be free. All human beings have descended from a common free mother, and therefore have a right to freedom. According to the Declaration of Independence, *liberty is an inalienable right*. It is always safest to do exact justice. Where slaves are numerous a gradual emancipation is unsafe, and injurious in its operation. It is calculated to produce discontent in the minds of those not liberated, and to tempt them to insurrection; it greatly protracts the evils of the system; it prevents the emancipated from employment, because they and the slaves can not well be worked together; and hence they must be forced into the free States, in which there is no suitable employment for them. It also prevents any regular system of education. The tendency of such emancipation is only evil, and that continually so long as it exists. The wise and just method of emancipation is to abolish the slave system at once, to enact laws to restrain the idle and vicious, to support the aged and infirm, and to educate all capable of being educated. Such a method of emancipation will secure the best interests of both the white and colored population.

II. The way is now open for offering reasons, why the General Government should make an appropriation, sufficient to purchase the freedom of the slaves.

1. The General Government has so fostered the slave system, and the State Governments have all so sustained it, as to involve the nation in the sin of the most grievous oppression. The General Government has procured territory for it, and thus has greatly extended the system; its legislation has ever been favorable to the slaveholding interests, and it is pledged to suppress any insurrection that any State can not suppress. Consequently, the power of

the General Government is secured to the slave States, to enable them to hold in bondage more than three millions of helpless people. The free States have ever been the prison walls of this enormous house of bondage. And thus the criminality of this entire system of cruelty and wrong is equalized among all the States. Consequently the whole nation should bear the burden of emancipation, and it is under the highest possible obligation to abolish the entire system. God holds the entire nation responsible for all the oppressions and wrongs resulting from the slave system.

2. The system of slavery will ultimately cost the Government more than would now purchase all the slaves. The annual increase of slaves is near a hundred thousand, enough to make a State every year. Hence the time is near when standing armies will be necessary in all the slave States, to keep the slaves in subjection, and this will require every year expenditures so enormous, as will soon far transcend what would now purchase freedom for all in bondage.

3. Slavery endangers the very existence of the Government. The struggle for extension has already commenced between the free and slave States. The demand made by the slave States for more territory is to prolong their existence. The increase of slaves is such as must soon fill up all their territories, exhaust all their soil, and bring on a state of poverty and wretchedness that has had no parallel on earth. The demand for more territory is one of absolute necessity. The free States to preserve their existence must resist the demand, and hence the two sections of the Union must come into desperate conflict. The struggle has now begun in Kansas with shocking and bloody outrages, and is progressing, with an increasing bitterness that presages a revolution and the utter ruin of the Government. Slavery is a swelling tide of ruin that is likely soon to pour its desolating floods over all

the land, and bury beneath its deadly waters the fairest portion of the world ! - Will it not be wise now to meet the expense, vast as it may be, and at once abolish this ruinous system of oppression and set the nation free ?

4. Slavery diminishes the white population. It generates idleness and intemperance, adultery and fornication, gambling and violence, and every species of vice and crime that is destructive of human life. Of course, under such circumstances, the white people die in greater proportions than the slaves do, while, at the same time, the slaves are bred for market and are made prolific to the extent of their capacity, and consequently, they increase much faster than they would do by the regular laws of marriage when free. That class of people who believe the increase of the colored population is an evil, should look at these facts. By the abolition of slavery the undue increase of the colored people can be prevented. And all who are opposed to the destruction of the white population; and the horrid brutalizing of the colored people, should look at these considerations, and go for abolishing a system so destructive to human nature, and so derogatory to the character of man.

5. Slavery has created a monopoly large enough to abolish the liberty of the entire nation. The slaveholders do not exceed three hundred and fifty thousand in number, and yet they own more than three millions of slaves, and lands enough on which to work them. And the consequence is, that they have, to a great extent, subjected the press and the pulpit to their domination; they have secured to themselves a great proportion of the offices of the General Government; they have proscribed every man who does not favor their system, and they have controlled the legislation of the country. To them the General Government has bowed down in the most

humble submission, and commanded all its good citizens to become their slave-catchers, and the public funds have been actually applied to returning fugitive slaves. Seldom, if ever, has a nation been so degraded. Liberty and slavery can not long dwell together, the one must sooner or later prostrate the other. Liberty or slavery must be abolished. It is better far to bear the expense of emancipation than the degradation and burden of slavery.

6. Slavery degrades those that labor, by making labor the business of slaves, who are a most degraded class of beings. And such degradation is no small evil, as it tends to make many, who might be usefully employed, avoid labor. The laboring classes are the actual producers, the real makers of the wealth of the nation, and the procurers of the comforts of life. If any classes deserve to be honored, it is those that labor. They have built all our splendid cities, all our steamboats, and all our ships; they have made all our railroads; they have opened every field, and have provided all our food and raiment. To degrade the laborer, and thus to make men ashamed to labor, is to do a great injury to society in general.

7. Slavery weakens the nation, and exposes it to the power of foreign nations. It is rearing up a terrible enemy in the heart of the country. There are now three millions two hundred thousand slaves, and the current ten years will bring them up to four millions. Now, suppose we were to get into war with Britain, and she should send into the South a black army from the West Indies, and proclaim liberty to the slaves. She could raise within our own borders an army of more than five hundred thousand of the stoutest men in the world, inured to the climate, to hardships, and to cruelty. Such an army could be raised and trained in a short time. The slaves would have no property to defend, and, of

course, nothing to do but to fight and seize upon the property of the country to support them in their terrible warfare. Inspired with the hope of freedom, and accustomed to scenes of barbarous cruelty, they would be desperate in their efforts to conquer their oppressors. Such a war would produce a scene of blood, suffering, and desolation such as the world has seldom known. In a short time, more might be lost in blood and treasure than would equal a sum necessary to purchase all the slaves in the Union. May such a day of blood and suffering never come! There is reason to believe that, in fear of such an event, the General Government yielded up to the British nation a part of Oregon Territory that justly belonged to the United States. Is it wise to suffer such a system to prolong its existence, and extend its weakening and ruinous influences to the vitals of the nation? Can any sacrifice made for its abolition equal that of its countenance?

8. Slavery is a source of ruinous ignorance. It monopolizes the lands, so that the free white population is too sparse to form common schools, and consequently the poor white people can not educate their children, and many of the children of the wealthy are so ungovernable and profligate that they can not be educated. It is owing to these circumstances that so large a proportion of the white people of the slave States can not read. And a number of those in the free States that can not read are the wretched poor, that have come from the slave States to seek a better home. Such ignorance greatly endangers our republican institutions.

Again, ignorance is the only chain by which the slaves can be held in bondage; and therefore they are, by severe penalties, denied the privilege of being taught to read a sentence in the Sacred Scriptures; and hence we have, in

this professedly Christian country, three millions and a half of colored people, who are denied the means of learning to read the revelation God has given to accomplish the salvation of this lost world. What a disgrace to the Christianity of this nation? Can we pay too much to remove a system of darkness so horrible?

9. Slavery is one of the strongest obstacles to the propagation of the Gospel. It has occasioned discord in all the churches, divided the largest denominations, and produced contention and strife, the sources of "every evil work." And by such means it has brought great reproach upon Christianity, and implanted infidelity in the hearts of thousands, and greatly increased the labor of propagating the Gospel. A knowledge of its enormities has set the very heathen against the Christian system, and planted the strongest obstacles in the way of the missionaries of the cross. At home it has engendered ignorance and vice by which millions of the bond and the free are engulfed in endless perdition. No other system of equal extent has sent so many souls to the regions of interminable despair. Slavery is a fountain of moral and eternal death, that pours its deadly waters over all the land. To abolish it would be to give millions access to the fountain of light and life. What is money compared with eternal interests? The salvation of one immortal being is worth infinitely more than all the millions of dollars necessary to set all the enslaved free. Will not all the hosts of the living God come together as with one heart and soul to accomplish this great moral enterprise. Let the Church of God but speak in all her branches, the nation will respond, and the glorious work will be done.

10. The abolition of slavery would be a great advantage to all the poorer classes of people both foreign and home born, by opening all the South to free labor. It would

secure to them profitable employment, enable them to procure lands and gain wealth. The South, if free, would build up the old waste places, and by the hands of free labor, the desolate lands would become fruitful fields, railroads would be made, as in the North, and the sound of the car of commerce would be heard in all her cities, villages, towns; churches, colleges, and school houses, would spring up to adorn, enrich, and bless all the long cursed land of slavery. Great would be the improvements made, vast would be the demands for laborers, and immense would be the means of gaining wealth. Thousands that are now poor would arise and become rich, and eminent in civil society. Will not all the poorer classes, both of foreigners and native born, unite in moving the General Government to extinguish a system that shuts out thousands and millions of the poor from the means of salvation and the choicest blessings of life?

11. To free the slaves without purchase would render the farmers and planters unable to employ them when freed, and consequently the South could not be cultivated, nor could there be a market for Northern products. If the freedom of slaves be obtained by purchase, then they will receive a great proportion of the purchase money in the form of wages, and hence they will be enabled to buy Northern products. The South will populate as densely as the North, and millions more than do now will come to the Northern markets. The more wealth accumulates at the South, the greater will be the consumption of Northern products. Consequently, by such liberation of the slaves, merchants, mechanics, and farmers at the North will have opened to them many sources of wealth and enterprise. The money thus expended will open a vast field from which to gather treasure. To shut the slaves and their masters up in their present limits until they

would be so straightened and starved as to impel emancipation would require a long process of poverty and degradation. It would long protract the evil, occasion a vast amount of man-suffering, and do the nation immensely more injury in morals and wealth than the money necessary to liberate the slaves would be worth. To depress and reduce the South to poverty, can not fail to injure the North to a great extent. Hence, by purchase, is the best method of abolishing slavery.

12. To liberate the slaves by purchase would be an act of great benevolence. It would be giving a vast sum of money to relieve a helpless people, who are deprived of all that makes existence here desirable, and are, to a great extent, shut out from hope beyond the grave. Nothing else could so enhance the nation in the eyes of all other nations. Come, let us all work together, and so let slavery be abolished, and then the strife between the two sections of the Union will cease, and North and South will have the same common interests and will be all one people, and the churches now sundered by slavery can come together and love as brethren, and peace will flow like a river to bless all the heritage of God.

NOTICE.

July, 1856.

The American Reform Tract and Book Society is progressing in efforts to spread light, and promote action on the great question of Freedom and Slavery. Some twenty Tracts, and a dozen books have been stereotyped and published. Arrangements are made for increasing this number just as fast as funds are procured, and it is expected the Society will soon be able to furnish an Anti-Slavery Sabbath School Library, in connection with other Books and Tracts.

The Society sends out the "Christian Press," its monthly record (gratis), to contributors and friends.

Office and Depository, No. 28 West Fourth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.

G. L. WEED, *Cor. Sec. and Treas.*